

TESTIMONY
AND
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
OF THE

Presbyterian Church Defence Association.

THIS Association deems it a duty, in view of the prevailing tendencies of the present day, to give forth the following Declaration of its Principles and bear its testimony against the several innovations which are being introduced into the worship of the Church, not unfrequently ending in serious departures from the truth, in matters of doctrine, and which, we regret to say, has largely resulted from the action of the supreme court.

I. We believe the Scriptures of Truth to be the only rule of faith and practice.

II. That the Westminster Confession of Faith and Directory for public worship, is the best human interpretation of the Will of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures.

III. That the Church of Christ being a Divine Institution, and, therefore, perfect at its first organization, it is not possible to improve its laws or amend its constitution, and, therefore, bear our testimony against the following innovations as unwarranted by the Word of God, and a departure from Reformation principles.

1. We are opposed to the introduction or use of instrumental music in the service of praise as contrary to the teachings of these Standards, which, in the opening section of the 21st chapter reads thus: "That the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by His own revealed will that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures," and in the maintenance of this safe principle, which has ever been dear to the heart of true-hearted Presbyterians; we must continue our opposition thereto until shown scriptural authority for its introduction or use in the New Testament Church.

2. The use of hymns of praise of human composition, we consider an unwise innovation full of danger to purity of worship and doctrine, and quite unnecessary for the purposes of devotion, as we have, in the inspired psalmody of the Church, material of praise far surpassing any human composition, and suited to every want of the Christian.

3. The practice of sitting during the offering of prayer we cannot but look upon with regret as manifesting a spirit of irreverence in this solemn approach to the Most High, as paying less homage to the King of Kings, than we would to an earthly potentate, and, as unwarranted by the example of God's saints in all ages of the Church.

4. We also desire to bear testimony against the unscriptural means frequently employed for raising money for Church purposes, such as bazaars, church concerts, etc., as betraying a lack of Faith in the power of Divine truth, to elicit the free-will offerings of God's people, and as dishonouring to religion, being frequently but an excuse for worldly amusement.

5. Congregational choirs we consider an unwise innovation, tending, rather, to destroy congregational singing than improve the psalmody of the Church as a frequent source of trouble to church sessions and congregations, and as not unfrequently turning the holy service of Divine praise into an exhibition of musical skill.

6. We regard the Sabbath-School as being an important part of the Church, under the direct control of the session, and where the young ought to be trained in the simple knowledge of scripture truths, and for properly engaging in the services of the sanctuary.

IV. We desire to put this our testimony on record, deeply impressed with a sense of danger to the purity of the Church arising from these in some cases apparently very unimportant innovations, but, which foreshadow more serious departures, and, warned by experience in the case of most of the heresies which have sprung up in the past, that the first step taken was, leaving the beaten track, and letting will-worship gain the ascendancy. "He that is faithful in little will be faithful also in much."

And, finally, in order to the successful attainment of the purposes of the Association, we call upon the faithful of the land to aid and assist us by joining the ranks of our Association, by their prayers, by their counsel, or in any other way that circumstances may suggest, and, above all, pray that the God whom we serve may fill us with all wisdom and spiritual understanding, while we seek to address ourselves to the accomplishment of this great work.

Signed on behalf of the Association,

DONALD SUTHERLAND,
Secretary.

TORONTO, May 3rd, 1881.

JAMES BAIN,
President.